

Community Consultation draws to a close

The final Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) / Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) community consultation for 2004 has now been held, and October 15 was the final date for the lodgment of submissions.

A total of 20 Forums have now been held across Australia covering rural and metropolitan communities, with approximately 1,170 people having attended. MHCA reports that many people have spoken openly about their difficulties in seeking, receiving or delivering care. Others, such as police officers and supported accommodation providers have spoken about their challenging experiences in trying to support people with a mental illness.

More than 300 formal submissions have been received from individuals and organisations, with an overwhelming response from parents who have lost a child to suicide. Due to the amount of information before the Council and HREOC, the final report will now be released in early March 2005.

Before the report is released, final consultation will be held with the Minister for Health and the Director of Mental Health in each of the States and Territories providing them with the opportunity to respond and put forward their views.

MHCC commends the efforts of the Council and the Human Rights Commission to bring to light the shortfalls in the system and ensure mental health remains on the political agenda.